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STANFORD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
Department of Genetics

Dr. Lewis R. Goldberg
Oregon Research Institute
P. O. Box 3196
Eugene, Oregon 97403

Dear Dr. Goldberg,

Thank you so much for sending me the comprehensive progress report of the ORI. Formidable!

It will take me some more time to adequately digest even this overall summary. I am fascinated to find several different areas of overlapping interest.

Attached is a list of the publications that I would be grateful to receive according to your offer penned on the report.

I was particular pleased to note the current study on birth order. I had dabbled in this some while ago in the belief that intra-family variables were the only ones that could be completely isolated from genetic factors and could help introduce more badly needed rigor into nature/nurture analyses. It also seemed likely that most environmentalists interpretations should imply a large weight to birth order, or family constellation in general, as a determinant of personality outcome.

The past literature on this subject is, as I need hardly mention, quite unsatisfying. May I however call your attention to a study by Peter M. Blau and Otis D. Duncan, "The American Occupational Structure", 1968, which title might appear unpromising for a bearing on this subject. I dabbled to some extent with the same data file and in my own perusal was particularly impressed by the second order effect of birth order summarized on their page 32. This merely confirms our traditions of primogeniture; folk wisdom would suggest that parent-offspring correlations would be higher, or at least more stressed, for the first birth order than for later. Important effects of birth order might be obscured if different strata of parental influence were intermingled and confounded. I hope you will have an opportunity to examine this question in the material indicated as the subject of Mr. Shiman's thesis.

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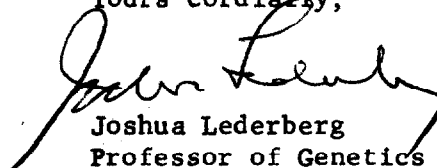
Some of the more intense effects are obscured by the rather rough categories used in these analyses. They do show in the original data, and you will not be surprised to find that physicians run in families. As a recall, perhaps ~~imperfectly~~ ^{imperfectly}, there was quite a strong birth order effect on that correlation but the numbers necessarily start to thin out.

A somewhat similar kind of case has been made by Dr. Alan E. Bayer; I believe he has reviewed his work in the International Journal of Psychiatry 3:37, 1967.

I was intrigued by the abstracts of your papers on risk-perception which is an area not given sufficient weight in public policy formulation today - where a rather narrow economic, bayesian model is being pursued despite its psychological irrelevance to most citizens.

I look forward to continuing this correspondence after I had had an opportunity to read some more of the publications listed.

Yours cordially,



Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics

JL/rr